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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO IMAGE ACCELERATION

INTRODUCTION

Image Acceleration is a process which deals with the phenomenon of the brain's capacity to accelerate, intensify, and amplify mental subjective experiences. Referred to in the literature as Accelerated Mental Processing, AMP, it enables a person to process an enormous number of images in fractions of a second. Imagery is central in experiences of AMP because imagistic thinking is apparently not bound by the mechanisms that retard the flow of verbal thought (Jean Houston, 1982). Dr. Houston believes that "most thinking is geared to speech and to the movements of the body in work and play, an additional cause of the slowness of most thinking." She continues, "but thinking need not be limited by the slow pace of the physiological being or by the inhibitions of linear-verbal thought. In many instances of creative process, especially when it all comes together, the mind enters into a different temporality, and thinking that, sequentially, would take weeks, months, even years, is done in hours, minutes, and seconds."

The most dramatic illustration of accelerated mental processing is found in reports of thousands of near death situations where an individual, perhaps a mountain climber, falls from a great height and expects to die but somehow survives and later recalls that he/she mentally relived their entire life in a matter of a few seconds. This unique characteristic of the brain has also been described in dreams that seem to last hours but in reality last only a few seconds. In attempting to explain this brain phenomenon, Houston suggests that "there appears to be an adrenaline rush to the brain that triggers images patterned in a life review. . .linear time as we know it is suspended and we enter a world where events unfold at their own pace!" Research and theoretical discussion of AMP is comprehensively presented in Dr. Jean Houston's book entitled *The Possible Human*, 1982. Several studies, conducted by this acclaimed brain researcher, are presented demonstrating how individuals can learn to "process" information "through images" at accelerated rates of speed. . .hours and weeks of information subjectively experienced in minutes.

Researchers exploring the creative process have been extremely interested in how the brain produces images at extraordinary speeds. The "acceleration" issue will be one of the major areas scientists will focus on in the 1990's. Let's now put this science into a practical application for teaching and learning.

PERSPECTIVES

There exists a very interesting and significant relationship between the ability to produce "mental images" and creative thinking. According to E. Paul Torrance, (1963) the ability to evoke images, pictures in the mind, at an early age (5-7 years) is the single best prediction for later creative accomplishment. Brain researchers such as Ned Herman, (1982) have identified through various tests thousands of individuals (creative personality-types) who possess higher skills and ability for producing images. Psychologist Dr. Joyce Brothers has connected day-dreaming with creative thinkers. Other researchers who have spent many years studying and interviewing well-known creative people invariably describe "imagistic" thinking as a fundamental process used by these individuals. Two pioneers in educational imagery, E.P. Torrance and Joe Khatena, (1985) state that the "image" perhaps may be the best, and easiest means for tapping into our creative potential. Dr. A. Ahsen, author of *Psyche*, (1977) believes imagery is the lightning rod of human experience. Charles Garfield, Ph.D. (1984) studied thousands of "peak performances" in life and found as one of the major characteristics of this group, the ability to use, on a regular basis, "mental imagery".

Memory experts suggest that forming images significantly enhances the memorization process. M.T. Bagley presents several studies in, *USING IMAGERY TO DEVELOP MEMORY*, (1987) that clearly show how imagery improves comprehension, memory, and learning. In a more recent study, F. Burns, (1989) found that the application of guided mental imagery as an instructional strategy had a positive and significant effect on student learning.

Today, hundreds of thousands of students worldwide are being instructed through guided and non-guided imagery, not only in the arts, but increasingly in the core curriculum areas, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, etc.

Point 1: A significant relationship exists between the ability to evoke, produce, and control “images” and creative thinking and production.

Imagery fuels creative thinking, it allows individuals to process larger quantities of information in shorter periods of time. I have developed a formula for this fact. Here it is: LCT=HIY

LOW CLOCK TIME = HIGH INFORMATION YIELD

The present state of brain research suggests that thinking in images may involve areas of the brain where the thought process is more passive and receptive, and also more susceptible to patterns, symbolic processes, and constellational constructs (Houston, J. 1982). In verbal-linear thinking, for example, says Houston, the thinking process tends to go 1-2-3-4-5 or a-b-c-d-e, one specific thing following another. In imagistic thinking the pattern is more often 1 through 5, 5 through 20, a through m,, m through z. . .a patterning of ideas and images gathered up in a simultaneous constellation. . .and because the brain can process millions of images in microseconds, and images seem to have their own subjective time not related to serial clock time, a great deal can be experienced in imagistic thinking in shorter times and in ways that evidently cannot occur in verbal thinking. **To deprive students of opportunities to learn through imagistic thinking is down right negligent.** Non-guided imagery has given the practitioner a whole new set of tools. . .they are of the CAN’T MISS variety! So let’s get on with it!

An interesting hypothesis is before us – if imagery enhances thinking and learning – would accelerating the image process then produce more creativity, more productive thinking, and more learning? It would seem valuable then, for a person to engage in one minute of accelerated imagery resulting in a substantial yield of information (creative ideas, perspectives, information review, in depth exploration, etc.). We need to think very seriously about these issues.

The art in teaching through imagery is learning to do a non-guided image on the content or issue of the moment, i.e., what is being presented in the lesson. The image raises the **intensity** of what is being focused on (thoughts, meanings, actions, events) from a 60% concentration level to perhaps a 90-95% concentration level. Once students understand how they can direct the image process with school-related matter, they will then begin a transference process where they will apply and use imagery as a “tool” for learning. . .at any time. . .at any place. The acceleration process will enable students to increase production, yield, output, etc. in short periods of time. They will experience, in many cases, both quantity and quality of thought for a relatively low investment (30 seconds, 1 minute, 3 minutes). It is the realization that one can produce so many images in such a short time that intrigues, motivates, and encourages repeated use of the process. **Think of it this way. . .image acceleration is the use of one’s natural human skills (imaging) in a much faster manner.**

Point 2: A low investment in clock time, e.g., one minute, may produce a considerable amount of meaningful information and a high quality subjective experience.

The implication here is that we have a “teaching tool” which has enormous flexibility, that can be used with any subject matter in brief periods of time.

EXERCISE: NO.1

PROCESS: IMAGE ACCELERATION

THINKING AREA: AFFECTIVE

CONTENT/THEME: FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

LENGTH OF TIME: ONE MINUTE

INSTRUCTIONS

In this exercise students will have 60 seconds to observe all the different and unique facial expressions of average people doing everyday things. Encourage students to explore, seeing as many different facial expressions as they can, rapidly and consistently. Tell the students they may go anywhere and see any types of people—let your imagination be your guide.

CREATIVE RESPONSE OPTIONS

- A. Select your favorite “facial expression” and write about its unique qualities.
- B. Select two different “facial expressions” seen—draw them and write a paragraph comparing their distinct and obvious differences.
- C. Create a collage of all the different “facial expressions” seen during the image.
- D. Select four or five “facial expressions” you saw and create a brief “saying,” “quote,” or “comment” that each expression might say.
- E. Write a brief essay on the “power” of “facial expressions”.
- F. Make a list of “facial expressions” seen (names) and categorize them into separate and appropriate areas, e.g., positive, sincere, (write the name or identifying element of the expression under categories created).
- G. Recreate some of the “facial expressions” seen and present them to the class—make the expression and let the class try and guess the inference you have made for it (write down your interpretation on a card).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did the images appear?
2. How would you classify the expressions seen in the imagery?
3. Which image was the most vivid one? Why?
4. How did you move from one image to the next?
5. What were your thoughts as the different facial images appeared?

EXERCISE VARIATIONS

1. Create images of positive friendships you have had in the past with peers.
2. Identify a song which has a strong appeal—then observe many situations where people are reacting to the song.
3. Identify a personality quality—then create images of that quality in action, in life.
4. Observe how people react to different colors.
5. See yourself creating, using your favorite art medium—see the process, products and consequences.